

Message Text

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SUBJ: DUBLIN REACTION TO NI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

SUMMARY: DUBLIN REACTIONS TO OUTCOME OF NI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN POSITIVE. OBSERVERS STRESS EMERGENCE OF SDLP AS SOLE VOICE OF MINORITY AND FRAGMENTATION ON UNIONIST SIDE. RESULT SEEN AS VICTORY FOR MODERATION AND REJECTION OF VIOLENCE. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AS TO WHETHER UNIONISTS WILL PURSUE MODERATE COOPERATIVE COURSE. GOI HAS HOPES PROGRESS TOWARD ORGANIZATION OF ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE WILL BE AS RAPID AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER DEFUSE DANGER OF UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE DURING NI MARCHING SEASON. END SUMMARY

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED OUTCOME OF ASSEMBLY ELECTION WITH HIGHLY KNOWLEDGEABLE FONOFF OFFICIAL WHO NOTE TWO MAIN RESULTS:

A) CLEAR-CUT EMERGENCE OF SDLP AS ONLY VOICE OF MINORITY IN NORTH. FROM NOW ON, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBTS AS WITH WHOM BOTH IRISH AND BRITISH GOVTS SHOULD BE DEALING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MINORITY.

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B) FRAGMENTATION OF UNIONIST SIDE. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH OF THREE--OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, LOYALIST COALITION, OR SOME IN-BETWEEN GROUP--WOULD BE DOMINANT. FONOFF OFFICIAL SAID THERE WERE AS MANY AS NINE WAIVERERS AMONG FAULKNER'S 22 "PLEDGED UNIONISTS," BUT AT SAME TIME THERE WERE FIVE OF TEN "OTHER" UNIONISTS WHO WERE MORE MODERATE THAN FAULKNER. SOURCE BELIEVED FAULKNER WOULD PROBABLY SURVIVE AND WOULD LIKELY SHY AWAY FROM EXTREME RIGHT BECAUSE OF STRONG, UNIFIED VOICE REPRESENTED BY SDLP.

2. FONOFF OFFICIAL BELIEVED ALLIANCE BETWEEN SDLP AND CRAIG-PAISLEY LOYALISTS, WHICH HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN NEWSPAPER RECENTLY, WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, BECAUSE OF DEEP DIFFERENCES OF VIEW BETWEEN THESE GROUPS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF QUESTION RE WHAT GOI EXPECTED WOULD HAPPEN NEXT, FONOFF SAID GOI HOPED MOVEMENT TOWARD ORGANIZATION OF ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE WOULD BE RAPID

A) BECAUSE EXPLOSIVE SUMMER MARCHING SEASON WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN AND IT WOULD BE BETTER IF ATTENTION COULD BE FOCUSED ON POLITICAL MOVEMENT,

B) UNLESS PROGRESS WAS FAIRLY RAPID, TRIPARTITE BRITISH, IRISH, NI CONFERENCE WOULD NOT GET OFF THE GROUND.

4. SOURCE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, THAT PROGRESS WOULD BE RAPID, NOTING THAT NI BILL HAD NOT PASSED AT WESTMINSTER AND NO RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR ASSEMBLY DRAWN UP. WHILE LEADERS OF VARIOUS GROUPS WOULD GET TOGETHER INFORMALLY, SOURCE DID NOT BELIEVE ASSEMBLY COULD BE CONVENED BEFORE SEPTEMBER.

5. FONOFF OFFICIAL SAID FONMIN FITZGERALD WAS "VERY OPTIMISTIC," PERHAPS MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN HIS OWN BUREAUCRATS. IRISH PRESS REPORTED FITZGERALD STATED JULY 1 THAT RESULT OF ELECTION DEMONSTRATED REJECTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF VIOLENCE FROM WHATEVER SIDE AND THAT IRA MUST NOW SEE NO FUTURE IN THEIR LINE OF CONDUCT. FITZGERALD SAID GOI WOULD CONTINUE PRESS BRITISH FOR REMAINING REFORMS WITHOUT WHICH THERE COULD BE NO PERMANENT SOLUTION, INCLUDING REFORM OF POLICE AND CIVIL SERVICE.

6. DUBLIN NEWSPAPER JULY 2 GENERALLY REFLECTED ABOVE VIEWS STRESSING PARTICULARLY EMERGENCY OF SDLP AS

ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF MINORITY. IRISH PRESS SAID THERE WAS REGRET BUT REALISTIC UNDERSTANDING IN GOI THAT VOTING STILL WENT ALONG SECTARIAN LINES IN NORTH. IRISH TIMES REPORTED GOI VIEWS ON ELECTION AS "POSITIVE," AS PEOPLE HAD VOTED THAT PROBLEMS SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY POLITICS NOT VIOLENCE, THAT NEW ASSEMBLY WAS MOST REPRESENTATIVE IN NI HISTORY, AND THAT SINGLE MINORITY PARTY ELECTED WHICH COULD SPEAK WITH "GREAT AUTHORITY," TIMES NOTES THAT, FOR FIRST TIME IN 50 YEARS, MINORITY PARTY WOULD HAVE TO ACT AS "A GOVT PARTY."

7 EDITORIALY, TIMES SAID "OMENS ARE GOOD," ARGUING THAT MODERATION HAD WON OUT WITH SDLP SUCCESS AND FACT THAT ALLIANCE HAD BEEN ABLE GARNER EIGHT SEATS. IRISH INDEPENDENT CALLED ELECTION RESULTS "POSITIVE," DEMONSTRATING REJECTION OF VIOLENCE, ENDORSEMENT OF WHITE PAPER, ENDORSEMENT OF SDLP BY MINORITY, ENDORSEMENT OF POWER-SHARING. IRISH PRESS WAS SLIGHTLY LESS ENTHUSIASTIC, NOTING CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY THAT UNIONISTS WOULD COOPERATE IN MAKING SYSTEM WORK.

8. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT NOT TO BE INFECTED WITH OPTIMISM REPORTED ABOVE, IT STILL SEEMS VERY EARLY TO BE CERTAIN WHETHER AND HOW POWER-SHARING WILL WORK. CLEARLY GOI IS GOING TO BE AS COOPERATIVE AS POSSIBLE, BUT BIGGEST STUMBLING BLOCK, AS SEEN FROM DUBLIN, WILL BE ORGANIZATION OF EFFECTIVE MODERATE UNIONIST BLOC. ANOTHER GOI SOURCE WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN FONOFF OFFICIAL ABOVE, EXPRESSING DOUBT ABOUT FUALKNER'S COMMITMENT TO WHITE PAPER, OR TO ANY POLICY OTHER THAN POLITICAL SURVIVAL FOR THAT MATTER. SORENSON

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